

**Message #23****Ecclesiastes 7:9-14**

When it comes to living life before God, there are two ways to live it: One way is the way of wisdom. This is the type of lifestyle that puts God at a preeminent position and then purposes to understand His Word and apply His Word to any situation or circumstance. The other way is the way of a fool. The fool proudly and arrogantly lives life his own way. God is not in the picture and the Word of God and the will of God are not applied to anything.

**A MEANINGFUL AND FULFILLED LIFE COMES WHEN ONE LIVES A LIFE THAT GOD WOULD CLASSIFY AS A WISE LIFE.**

Living the life of a fool will never bring meaning and fulfillment in life. It may bring some seemingly positive emotional surge for a moment, but in the long haul it will not bring meaning and fulfillment to life.

Now, in this passage of Scripture there are some very specific and convicting elements that are important to us living a wise life. All of these elements naturally presuppose that our life is focused “above the sun.” All of these elements presuppose that one has God in a preeminent place in life.

**ELEMENT #1 – A wise meaningful life is a life that controls one’s temper. 7:9**

Solomon is telling a person in this verse what not to do if one wants a meaningful and fulfilled life. Specifically, what he says here is not to be one who is an angry person.

Now, the word “anger” is actually one that means to be one who becomes irritated or provoked (Gesenius, p. 409). Solomon’s point is the wise person is not one who is easily or quickly provoked or irritated. It is not that the wise person does not ever become angry or irritated, it is that he is not quick to become this way.

Now he gives one simple reason why a wise person is not quick to become angry—because one who is this way is a fool. From God’s perspective, people who quickly or easily lose their tempers are fools (Prov. 29:8-11, 22).

Wise people in Scripture are always controlled people. Spiritual people are controlled people. In fact, Paul wrote that the fruit of the Spirit was love, joy, peace, patience... gentleness and self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23).

There is a place for righteous anger. Righteous anger is not simply blowing one’s top or losing one’s temper. It is a remarkable exhibition of intense emotion, courage and virtue in the face of opposition and evil. There is nothing wrong with this kind of anger.

1. Confess your struggle openly and honestly to God. I John 1:9
2. Confess your struggle openly and honestly to righteous people who can and will pray for you in ways God is likely to answer. James 5:16
3. Identify things that quickly make you angry and avoid them until you sense you are prepared to face them in a God-honoring way. Prov. 3:7-8; 4:14-15; 14:16\*, 22:3\*
4. Realize that when your emotions begin to stir—depression, insecurity, failure, fear or even happiness—you may lose control of your temper. Therefore, one must quickly deal with emotional surges (Phil. 4:8).
5. Do not neglect your health and exercise. There is value in proper rest, exercise, diet and entertainment.
6. Be truthful about yourself, but do not easily accept internal messages or irrational or emotional thoughts. Remember, what we oft times emotionally think or feel is wrong.
7. Guard your tongue. Make yourself speak slowly, softly, calmly and kindly.
8. Cultivate honesty in communication. Honest communication keeps one from suppressing anger that can build up and blow up. Calmly, softly and kindly talk things out.
9. Resist competitiveness. People who are angry often view life as a competition against others and they resent those who are bigger, better, prettier and faster. We should realize that our responsibility is not to compete with others, but to work on ourselves. We should try and esteem others better than ourselves in some way (Phil. 2:3).
10. Rid one's self of old angers. Dwelling on the past is wrong and will cause one to be angry.
11. Work on being the best you can in every present relationship.

**ELEMENT #2** – A wise, meaningful life is one that does not live in the past . **7:10**

Wise people do not dwell on or live in the past. It is not the mark of one who is wise to talk about “the good ole days” as being better than the present days.

God is sovereign over every age and every age has had its share of difficulties, hardships and opportunities. Wise people realize that God is a God of the present. Wise people realize God is a here and now God. To spend our life thinking about the past is a very foolish way to live.

For example, back in Nehemiah's day, when the temple was being repaired and people were working together and excited about what God might do in the future, a bunch of “grumpy ole men” started depressing God's people by talking about how beautiful the temple used to be.

The rest of the people just kept working and singing and drowned out their foolish speech (Ezra 3:11-13). People who live in the past have no vision for greatness in the present or the future.

Forget the things behind and press on—that is the mark of wisdom.

**ELEMENT #3** – A wise meaningful life is one that does know the value of wisdom. **7:11-12**

People who see the sun know there is a real advantage to wisdom. Notice the focus is not “under the sun,” it is at and above the sun. In other words, one who is seeing the light, who recognizes the importance of God, realizes the value of His wisdom.

There is stability that comes from knowing you have an inheritance coming. Wise people are not foolish when it comes to finances. But Solomon makes it very clear that wisdom has one advantage that money will not ever have—it is life preserving.

**ELEMENT #4** – A wise and meaningful life is one that does not question God’s sovereignty.  
**7:13-14**

A wise person is one who realizes God is the one calling the shots. We are not able to withstand God on anything. What He bends, we cannot straighten. Even days of our lives are governed by Him. Our very life breath is governed by God (Dan. 5:23).

Wise people realize that when they are in times of prosperity, they can and should be happy. But they also realize that when they are in days of adversity, they can trust God’s sovereignty.

The last part of **verse 14** is critical—“So that man may not discover anything that will be after him.” We do not know why God does what He does and we do not know what ultimately is going to happen.

Some people question God’s love if all positive things aren’t happening. I love the words of C. S. Lewis: “We want...not so much a Father in heaven as a grandfather in heaven...whose plan for the universe was simply that it might be truly said at the end of each day, ‘a good time was had by all’...I should very much like to live in a universe which was governed on such lines. But since it is abundantly clear that I don’t, and since I have reason to believe, nevertheless, that God is love, I conclude that my conception of love needs correction” (Cited from Chuck Swindoll, p. 199).

God’s plan for our lives includes days of prosperity and days of adversity. The wise way to live is to trust God no matter what is happening. We should not become anxious or angry. We should not live in the past, but remain faithful to God in the present. This is the wise way to live life. It is the key to a meaningful life.